

MSD
Columbia
P·T·C·A·

Parent, Teacher, Community Association

April 1, 2025

Dear Maryland Legislators,

I am Meredith DeSomma, proudly serving as the President of the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) - Columbia Parent, Teacher, Community Association (PTCA). I am writing on behalf of the PTCA to express our support for HB 1363, titled "Places of Public Accommodation – Captioning for Motion Picture Houses; Alterations," sponsored by Delegate Harry Bhandari. This important bill requires motion picture houses with fewer than eight screens to provide open captioning for at least two screenings each week.

MSD Columbia serves many students from various counties across Maryland. Many students from areas like Hartford County, Queen Anne's County, St. Mary's County, and Baltimore City, do not have access to movie theaters with eight or more screens, which limits their ability to attend films that lack open captioning. This situation places them at a disadvantage compared to others who have access to theaters that provide this service.

Furthermore, the PTCA community and I strongly believe that this bill will benefit not only our students but also our staff and families, as well as the wider community outside MSD. Open captioning greatly aids children and adults in their language development and literacy skills. Additionally, it supports senior citizens, veterans, the deaf and hard of hearing, as well as individuals with auditory processing disorders and other medical conditions.

We urge you to support HB 1363, "Places of Public Accommodation – Captioning for Motion Picture Houses; Alterations."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meredith DeSomma

President, MSD Columbia PTCA

ptca@msd.edu